




Appendix H – Environment and Climate Change Action Plan Update


Workstream	Strategic Action	Task	Update
Biodiversity	1.1 External funding	Look for outside opportunities for grant funding or other support.	<p>ONGOING: Utilising grant money on the Rural England Prosperity Fund projects we've agreed with partners:</p> <p>Newmarket – This year's bridge and access project complete.</p>  <p>Mildenhall – The Trevor Hagger Gardens has been stripped and replanted. Certain amenity greens have been enhanced.</p> <p>Brandon - Landscaping work in Rought Avenue, proposed to the town council, as well as work to improve access by the Lake in Brandon County Park has been completed.</p> <p>Haverhill – Four amenity areas were proposed for environmental improvements and work is completed.</p>
		Seek external funding to help maintain and increase tree cover in West Suffolk Council managed areas.	<p>ONGOING: In October 2023, the council sent in an application to the Local Authority Treescape Fund (LATF) and was granted £27,000. By January 2024, 112 semi-mature heavy standard trees were planted using this grant. The grant funding also covers three years' worth of watering and aftercare.</p> <p>We also assisted the Woodland's Trust annual tree donation scheme hosted at Nowton Country Park on the 22-23 November 2023. See link and acknowledgement on the Suffolk Tree wardens web page.</p>
	1.2 Biodiversity & Environment Parks and Green Spaces	With regards our Green Flag (GF) sites we will identify improvements on the previous judges scores.	<p>ONGOING: Surveys undertaken in October 2023 at College Heath Road found that the plant, <i>Artemisia Campestris</i>, have increased from 41 plants in 2019 to 416 plants at the site. This will give the rare Wormwood Moonshiner beetles, that eat the seeds of Field Wormwood, a much bigger food resource.</p> <p>The Green Flag management plans and associated action plans have been reviewed and updated following last year's judgments. A number of actions have been progressed including:</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Carpark at West Stow has been resurfaced and drainage installed. The signage or interpretation material at Aspal Close has been updated and renewed. Abbey Gardens – we have increased the site’s biodiversity by planting around the central bedding area and introducing a new spring bulb planted area. We’ve also mulched the shrub beds on site to suppress the weed growth rather than using herbicide. <p>Submissions to Green Flags have again been made, and inspections have been undertaken from May 2024. Results expected in September.</p>
	1.3 Biodiversity & Environment Parks and Green Spaces	Encourage responsible use of green spaces - through better information.	<p>ONGOING: Aspal Close Nature Reserve has been focused on this year. In October 2023, an audit was undertaken of the existing signage at Aspal Close and a quote obtained for the production of new signage. This signage was produced and installed in May 2024, in time for Green Flag visit.</p>  <p>The replacement of old signage is an ongoing programme. We will be carrying out audits on priority sites this summer for replacement in the next financial year. The sites are still being finalised.</p>
		Review the maintenance regimes of grass areas owned by the council in order to increase biodiversity.	<p>ONGOING: In January 2024, a landscape review was produced and conducted alongside Parish and Town Councils. The key outcomes from the review were that there has been public dissatisfaction in the way the public realm has been managed. As such, we have redirected efforts to ensure more of a balance between the aesthetic and environmental considerations.</p> <p>New machinery purchased and new staff recruited for grass cutting. The new equipment purchased is: Toro LT-F3000 Triple Flail Mower (Landscapes team) John Deere 997 Zero Turn Mower (Landscapes team) John Deere 1580 Front Rotary Mower (Landscapes team) 2 x Hayter Harrier battery powered mowers (Abbey Gardens)</p> <p>A comprehensive review of Ground Maintenance took place see link: Review-of-WSC-Grounds-Maintenance-Operations.pdf (westsuffolk.gov.uk). The new grass cutting equipment enables us to maintain a wider range of grass management</p>

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			regimes including those more favourable for enhancing conservation and biodiversity.
		For those sites not subject to Green Flag scrutiny we will progress the recommendations made in the SWT phase one habit surveys for the public open spaces surveyed in 2018.	<p>ONGOING: Between September and December 2023, scything and meadow cutting work was undertaken in the Great Churchyard, Nowton Park and East Town Park. By January 2024, conservation work was completed at No Mans Meadow Bury St Edmunds by the Bury Water Meadows Group.</p> <p>Citizen science - The Lark has also been selected as the Suffolk river to be part of the national citizen science project for water quality. This is a very exciting initiative where the Lark and the work of the River Lark Catchment Partnership is up with the best in England on its citizen science work.</p>
		Investigate and develop business cases for grounds maintenance equipment renewal with green equipment.	<p>ONGOING: One of the outcomes of the Grounds Maintenance review was that we were able to bring forward the replacement of some of our older equipment sooner. This new equipment is more efficient.</p> <p>East Town Park have purchased a new Stihl RMA 765v battery powered cut and collect mower in October 2023, and Abbey Gardens purchased two electric powered Hayter lawnmowers in May 2024.</p>
	1.4 Partnerships	Work with local environment groups (for example, community groups) to improve environment and biodiversity at West Suffolk Council managed sites.	<p>ONGOING: Anglia in Bloom results are expected in July. Brandon in Bloom and Bury in Bloom are both a part of the competition.</p> <p>Over the course of the year, West Suffolk Council has continued to work with Bury Water Meadows Group and River Lark catchment Partnership.</p> <p>In March 2024, the River Lark Catchment Partnership was chosen to run a project on behalf of Anglian Water. The council is working with them on this, linking it into our work on the Chalk Streams Project.</p> <p>A Bioblitz event was held in the Abbey Gardens on 19 – 20 May. The event was arranged by the Bury Water Meadows Group and West Suffolk Hive. A variety of activities was undertaken during the two days including interactive walks, talks, school activities and entertainment.</p>

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			 <p>Provisional results are: Spiders 9 different species inc cucumber green and nursery web Beetles 7 different species Moths 5 different species Bee 2 different species Fly 2 different species Snail 2 different species</p> <p>Unexpected finds were: 24 spot ladybird Dark bush cricket Common pill bug Migrant hoverfly</p> <p>NEW TASK: Scope project focused on cleaner waterways.</p> <p>Working in partnership with local groups to consider ways to ensure waterways are clean and free of waste.</p>
Communities and Communications	2.1. Reduce public waste and improve recycling output.	Reduce the amount of waste that is created by public and businesses, such as food waste, through awareness raising campaigns across Suffolk.	<p>ONGOING: Over the course of the year, the council has been involved in numerous national, regional and local campaigns, including:</p> <p>Suffolk School Skills Days in October 2023 – The team attended events in Haverhill, Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds. Teaching children about recycling and showing them around a bin collection lorry.</p> <p>October 2023 - Food Savvy (23 October -13 November 2023 for four weeks social media and advertising campaign.</p> <p>January - Buy Nothing New Month and 'Its better in the bank' refresher in January via social media.</p> <p>March - Food Waste Week (18 - 24 March 2024)</p> <p>April - Earth Day RAF Mildenhall (8 April) and Stop Food Waste Day (24 April) social media campaign.</p> <p>May - Compost Week, Brandon Country Park 'Shovel it' giveaway event (8 May).</p> <p>World Environment Day – 5th June</p>

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			<p>Clean Air Day (20 June)</p> <p>The Great Big Green Week</p> <p>Plastic Free July (all month).</p>
		<p>Work to increase recycling through the use of blue bin and recycling sites in order to maximise the use of the current recycling systems in Suffolk.</p>	<p>ONGOING: By October 2023, analysis of the 'Shake it Out' campaign showed that it resulted in a reduction of prohibitive contamination by 2 per cent.</p> <p>Suffolk Waste Partnership (comms group) will be discussing ideas for a Suffolk-wide campaign for Autumn 2024, any campaign is limited due to pending changes to national recycling collection systems. The main idea for a new campaign is to personalise the service from the drivers/loaders collecting materials to those sorting the recycling materials at the processing plant.</p> <p>'Simpler Recycling' will make weekly household food waste collections and kerbside collections of glass/cartons compulsory from 31 March 2026. (Plastic films by 31 March 2027).</p>
		<p>Increase the quality of waste collected for recycling in response to commodity market requirements.</p>	<p>ONGOING: Efforts focused on the Foil Campaign (Alupro) to increase capture of foil being used and not recycled. The social media campaign was launched in March 2024 and ran for three weeks.</p> <p>Nationally contamination levels are increasing at Material Recycling Facilities (MRFs). In Suffolk, contamination levels remain at a consistent level and have declined in the last 12 months, bucking the national trend.</p> <p>Biffa (the MRF contractor) feel that the Suffolk Waste Partnership's consistent material quality levels are a credit to the work put into educational communications and collection crew stickering.</p>
		<p>Continue to promote anti-litter initiatives.</p>	<p>ONGOING: In March 2024, the Great British Spring Clean social media campaign was launched. The campaign engaged the public encouraging them to arrange their own litter picks. The results were mostly positive engagement – sharing with friends and groups. However, a few responses asked why this shouldn't be covered by council tax.</p> <p>In April 2024, the council carried out activity for Earth Day (22nd April). This work included social media posts, TikTok video, risk assessment, a litter pick at West Suffolk House (in which five members of staff took part).</p>

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		<p>Influence and respond to the future government Recycling and Waste Strategy for England, to be implemented from 2023 onwards.</p>	<p>ONGOING: Suffolk Waste Partnership are planning for new collections proposals under 'Simpler Recycling' which is due to be implemented by 31 March 2026.</p> <p>A weekly food waste collection for householders will be introduced and changes will be made to existing recycling and potentially general waste collections.</p> <p>Food Waste - weekly collection in small caddies. Dry Recycling - comingled (all acceptable materials together) - twin stream (paper/card and plastics/tins/glass). General Waste - 2 or 3 weekly collections.</p>
		<p>Increase activity to promote waste and recycling campaigns to local businesses and residents.</p>	<p>ONGOING: Recycling week 16-22 October 2023, 'The Big Recycling Hunt' – national campaign.</p> <p>Glass Better in the Bank – campaign finished in January 2024. Feedback was received from the public, including comments about comparisons to Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, counties surrounding Suffolk, where glass can go in blue recycling bins there.</p> <p>Recycling week 14-20 October 2024 – national campaign.</p> <p>All packaging to be stamped 'Recycle' or 'Do Not Recycle' from 1 April 2027.</p>
<p>2.2 Environment and biodiversity awareness raising campaigns.</p>	<p>Provide a range of public events and awareness campaigns at Parks, with a Ranger presence, to promote green initiatives and to provide advice to residents on how to protect and enhance habitats within their neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>ONGOING: In March 2024, the council engaged in International Compost Week. Communications led to increased turnout, with positive engagement on social media and at the event.</p> <p>The council also took part in a Green Careers Fair, which was promoted through social media.</p>	

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Activities and promotions are planned for National Allotments Week, 12-18 August 2024.

On 8 May, the council ran a free compost giveaway event at Brandon Country Park. This event is held annually; however, this was the best attended on record – with many event goers stating that the council’s promotion was key to attendance.



Promote local food production.

ONGOING:
The council has undertaken various activities to promote community and household food production including Food Savvy Suffolk – the council regularly shares posts on the council Facebook page.

We have incorporated a focus on locally grown produce when promoting West Suffolk markets.

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			Through locality budgets, councillors have supported Still Good Food in Bury St Edmunds
	2.3 Travel & Transport Partnership Working.	Work with Suffolk County Council to ensure West Suffolk benefits from the Cycling and Walking Fund.	ONGOING: The Anti-Idling Campaign was launched in February 2024. This received a number of comments asking about the validity of the advice (taken from Suffolk County Council promotional material), wanting improved/more transport networks, complaining about potholes and lengthy roadworks.
	2.4 Continue to work with partners and community groups to improve air quality.	Increase impetus on measures to tackle vehicle idling in sensitive locations.	ONGOING: In January 2024, the council renewed the Gt Barton Air Quality Action Plan, with a number of new actions, such as undertaking an infrastructure assessment to limit vehicle idling issues. Clean Air Day (20 June)
		Work with partners to promote improvement of Air quality by sharing information and positive work practices.	ONGOING: In October 2023, a joint Suffolk bid was submitted for DEFRA Air Quality Grant. However, DEFRA withdrew funding.
		Continue to support residents of West Suffolk to identify and develop community projects aimed at informing and promoting ways to improve air quality throughout the district.	ONGOING: The council has continued to work closely with Suffolk Climate Partnership. In the 2023-24 financial year, £9,485.80 (6 per cent of total fund) was allocated to Environment and Sustainability. Similarly, of the Community Chest (renamed Thriving communities Fund from this year) in 2024-2025, 3.5 per cent of total fund was allocated to projects with a focus on Environment and Sustainability. Of which 100 per cent was for projects aimed to reduce food waste
	2.5 Promote domestic renewable energy technologies, initially focusing on solar PV and Air Source Heat Pumps.	Promote domestic renewable energy technologies, initially focusing on solar PV and Air Source Heat Pumps.	ONGOING: From January 2024, the council began sending out social media updates on the Warm Homes initiative at least once per month. On 15 th February, a new video was produced by the council and launched focusing on energy efficiency retrofits for older properties in West Suffolk. On 6 th March, the council promoted a free Retrofit Solutions Conference to Suffolk residents, homeowners and built environment professionals. The conference focused on retrofit solutions designed to increase energy efficiency in older properties. From March 2024, the Decarbonisation Initiative Fund began providing support to Parish and Town councils to convert streetlights to LED. Mildenhall Town Council was the first to benefit from the scheme, with the council organising press releases and social media to promote the initiative. Over 1600 conversions have been funded through the Fund and will save around 200 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.

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	2.7 Improve Renewable Energy Portfolio.	Continue to invest in our Solar for Business scheme.	ONGOING: In 2023-2024, 2.5MW of new roof mounted solar were installed on 24 buildings in West Suffolk. This compares to the previous highest year of 1.3MW in 2022-2023. Roof mounted solar contributed £690,000 to council finances in 2023-2024, and carbon dioxide savings of 2.3 tonnes a year.
		Investigate opportunities to build and own another solar farm.	ONGOING: Currently monitoring the approval process for a 30 MW solar farm.
		Investigate opportunities for the development of renewable energy sources including wind and hydrogen.	ONGOING: Two council owned sites were investigated for a possible wind turbine but were unsuitable due to the proximity of nearby buildings. The council is monitoring the development of the hydrogen economy.
	2.8 Improve Public Electric Vehicle Charging.	Increase the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities on council-owned land.	ONGOING: Tender being prepared for Parkway (BSE) and Guineas (Newmarket) car parks – four 7kW sockets to be installed at each site. Multiple West Suffolk community sites put forward for installation under LEVI pilot funding – installations starting Autumn 2024. Tender currently open.
	2.9 Deposit returns scheme.	Pilot reverse vending machines.	ONGOING: Trovr Reverse Vending Machines set up in Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket from February 2024. The Machines are located in The Guineas and Leisure Centre in Newmarket; and West Suffolk College and the Parkway Multistorey Car park in Bury St Edmunds. The six-month trial runs out in August. An assessment will be carried out after completion. By June 2024, the reverse vending machines took in: Total: 5,956 items



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	NEW ACTION: Funding monitoring process	Establish process to collate and monitor internal and external funding that supports climate change or environmental initiatives.	Develop administrative process to collate and to monitor internal and external funding streams that benefit the local environment or reduces carbon emissions. This will make it easier to promote the work of the council.
	NEW ACTION: Green taxi fleet	Review emission requirements as part of the wider evaluation of the taxi policy.	
Existing housing	3.1 By working with partners explore how they wish to improve the energy efficiency of homes.	Confirm the standard of build intended. Establish a measure against the standard.	ONGOING: West Suffolk Council will work with its Housing Company Barley Homes to meet the new enhanced local plan and building regulations, to support the ambition for the company to be an environmental exemplar, noting the requirement for it to operate commercially.
		Improve social housing	ONGOING: Over the course of 2023-2024, 151 homes, under Flagship, have been retrofitted. The council is primarily working through the Safe Suffolk Renters (SSR) project, which has an objective to improve living conditions and energy performance. While SSR is focused primarily on private rental, there will be an important social housing element. The project is due to be launched in the latter half of 2024.
		Funding programmes to support retrofit and housing improvement	ONGOING: West Suffolk Council has been able to make progress here via the HUG scheme. Over 2023-2024, the HUG scheme has delivered the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 properties completed. • 34 applications approved (works progressing) • 150 applications awaiting approval from contractors / awaiting start date. Total Investment £121,658. The council is working with partners, including Suffolk County Council, in seeking to improve both the reporting and delivery of these schemes.
		NEW TASK: Working with Suffolk partners, consider the development of a reporting system for Social Homes and Private Rented Sector (PRS)	This will make it easier to understand the challenges, the quality of the housing in the area, and in engaging with households.
	3.2. Improve housing through funding and regulation	Establish regular monitoring of performance. Number of rented homes identified against those brought up to standard.	COMPLETE: Required data was added to KPI dashboard in October 2023.
		Support Suffolk-wide projects to improve Private Rented housing.	ONGOING: By March 2024, the Stock Conditions survey has been completed by Suffolk County Council and a report for West Suffolk received. The council is also working through the Safe Suffolk Renters (SSR) project, which has an objective to improve living conditions and energy performance.
	Improve sign-posting to funding.	ONGOING:	

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			<p>In October 2023, the council linked in with Suffolk-partners around a communications plan.</p> <p>The council will now look into making alteration to the council website to properly sign-post relevant funding information.</p>
		Explore options for housing improvement (retrofit) in upcoming Housing Strategy.	<p>ONGOING: The proposed Housing Strategy includes housing improvement commitments that includes retrofit: "Continue bids for funding from the Government and others to reduce emissions across all housing markets and to deliver improvements in energy efficiency particularly focusing on low-income households and vulnerable residents, working with partners across Suffolk."</p> <p>The Housing Strategy is due to be agreed in September 2024.</p>
		Housing improvement loans scheme.	<p>ONGOING: A scoping report on local housing funding schemes was delivered in January 2024.</p> <p>We will promote Suffolk wide interest free loan scheme when it comes online later this year.</p>
	NEW ACTION: Data collection and usage	Ensure that all decisions are underpinned by evidence and performance measures are put in place.	<p>Make good use of data sources including from Suffolk Office of Data Analytics' Environment and Housing reports.</p> <p>In the latter half of 2024, by overlapping this data with other location-based data, the council is working with SCC to develop a model to aid in locating, prioritising, and targeting resource for retrofit schemes.</p>
		Scope methods to better utilise data.	Scope methods to better utilise data to support the improvement and retrofit of current homes and buildings in West Suffolk.
Planning and regulation	4.1. Maximise application of planning policy to encourage higher performance in new build.	Develop the climate emergency and sustainable development strategic policy for the new local plan.	<p>ONGOING: Draft submission local plan considered and approved by Cabinet, 5 December 2023. The final consultation complete and submission made to the Secretary of State. Currently awaiting response in relation to the examination stage.</p>
		Promote PAN to officers and developers. Monitor usage, evaluate and seek feedback.	<p>COMPLETE: PAN paper is completed, and monitoring is ongoing.</p>
		Develop a checklist to accompany planning applications.	<p>ONGOING: The final list is being reviewed to ensure all necessary Biodiversity Net-Gain requirements are included. All local validation lists will be finalised, and a consultation will be used to confirm their usage over the summer.</p>
		NEW TASK: Continue to explore and monitor opportunities to require more stringent building standards than the national standard to ensure efficient buildings in advance of next local plan.	<p>ONGOING: The matter of whether more stringent requirements can be asked for in planning policy is currently being considered by the courts. Officers are continuing to monitor the outcome of this case and this matter will play out for West Suffolk's plan through the Examination in Public. A more appropriate task</p>

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			relating to land use planning would be to produce a supplementary planning document or additional technical guidance to support and encourage the delivery of sustainable homes. This could be through partnership working with developers and other stakeholders.
	4.2. Through the local plan process, address the challenge of protecting and enhancing biodiversity while providing growth.	On a continuing basis, ensure the skills in the Planning team are up to date in respect of natural capital, ecosystem services and in particular Green Infrastructure (GI) and Biodiversity Net-Gain (BNG).	ONGOING: Planning team undertakes regular training as required. In December 2023, guidance notes for Biodiversity Net-Gain were published by Government and reviewed by the team. Mandatory BNG is now in force and training is ongoing for officers. We will continue to monitor the impacts of the new requirements in terms of resourcing.
Review resources necessary to monitor adherence with planning policy and permissions to ensure agreed biodiversity and landscape improvements are implemented.		ONGOING: In 2023, the planning team noted that there was an ongoing issue with resource in terms of Ecology and Landscape advice. Following review, the Planning team will recruit a new Ecologist post over the summer 2024 from within approved budgets.	
Work with partners and developers to encourage sustainable tree retention and increase canopy cover.		ONGOING: In October 2023, officers attended an event with Suffolk County Council to look at street designed by principles in practice. The emerging Local Plan includes tree planting and increasing canopy cover.	
	NEW ACTION: Land usage	Scope and explore more efficient land usage – specifically investigate the possibility of building higher in order to maximise efficiency of space in building.	ONGOING: The emerging local plan allocates land for development and has considered density and best use of land. More detailed work would be carried out on a site-by-site basis through a Masterplan process and through pre-app discussions, taking into account local context and other planning policies. In addition, Design Code work could include an assessment of density and building heights across the district, which is being looked into by the Planning Policy Team.
	NEW ACTION: Climate Adaption Plans	Look to develop and adopt Climate Adaptation Plans to ensure that new buildings are able to deal with the effects of climate change – such as flooding and its cumulative impact.	ONGOING: The emerging local plan includes policies relating to climate change adaptations. Officers will continue to monitor progress through the examination considering any new government policy which might emerge on this.
	NEW ACTION: Facilitate and improve active travel.	Continue to develop planning approaches related to active travel.	Statutory processes for planning and transport, including town centre masterplans, are key to promoting active travel in towns, as any changes need to be approved through the planning process. Expectations for this action will initially include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and contribute to SCC local cycling and walking infrastructure plan in Autumn 2024. • Work with SCC to map existing network and planned improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure across the district. Developing existing links between WSC and Suffolk County Council, as the authority responsible for highways and public transport, will be key to this. The


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			annual report could also provide updates on existing proposals for towns in the area, including consideration of pedestrianisation of some town centre areas.
Corporate action	5.1. Environmental management systems	Review environmental management system in March every year to ensure completeness.	ONGOING: Review to commence in March and April during Environmental Statement data collection phase. All alterations or improvements are included in the notes section of the Environmental Statement.
		Work with all building users to reduce paper consumption by 5 per cent each year, to be measured in March.	ONGOING: Environmental Statement includes figures on paper usage. Over the course of 2023-2024, work has been undertaken to encourage councillors to be more digital and the Planning Development team have moved away from sending neighbourhood letters and encouraged to focus on online data. Across all buildings, the council has also removed four printers assessed to be unnecessary.
		Work with HR (and possibly SCC) to update the WSH green travel plan.	ONGOING: By January 2024, a staff survey had been undertaken and its results analysed. A list of tasks was developed from the survey analysis. Key areas of work are infrastructure, communications and incentives. This includes initially ordering two manual bikes from Temple, re-lining the car share section of Olding Road car park, and promoting green travel to workdays, which will take place in the latter half of 2024. The council will also refresh the Travel Plan for West Suffolk House during the second half of 2024 – supported by an online and interactive resource.
	5.3 Internal reporting.	Create a central register for grants or financial awards for environmental works.	ONGOING: In March 2024, the council set up a central folder tracking grants and financial awards for environmental works – this is mostly focused on climate change, carbon reduction. However, more needs to be done to incorporate environment and biodiversity, and this work is ongoing.
5.5 Reduce energy consumption from all sites.	Reduce energy consumption from all sites.	ONGOING: The decarbonisation fund has been used to install a variety of energy saving measures across the council's estate including Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), low energy hand dryers and LED lighting. In June 2024, ASHP & PV were installed at 6 Aspal Way. For year 2023-24, the council has emissions standing at 4,979tCO ₂ e against the target budgets to be achieved 2028 of 2,484tCO ₂ e to maintain trajectory to net zero. The data shows that a key contributor to the increase in emissions is from the council's leisure operations delivered by Abbeycroft Leisure. There has been a 0.5 per cent decrease in emissions from council activity and a 4.6 per cent increase in emissions from Abbeycroft Leisure compared to 2022-23. A review of all leisure centres is currently underway to identify building improvements that will address emissions. The council had identified a range of improvements and made an application to the Government's swimming pool fund in 2023-24	

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			but was only awarded £35,000 to deliver some filtration improvements. Proposals will be brought forward as part of the council's Net Zero investment fund.
		NEW TASK: Scope the process to take council buildings off gas.	<p>The Apex and West Suffolk House will be taken off gas by 2026. Also by March 2026, we will seek to commission and receive the external advice needed to scope the process to phase out council usage of gas from all council buildings considering financial needs and timescales.</p> <p>The council's default position on new buildings and boiler replacements will be to ensure that they run on electric, rather than gas i.e. the case will have to be made to use gas rather than vice-versa.</p>
		NEW TASK: Develop a business case to end the use of Combined Heat and Power (CHPs) in all council leisure centres to be ready for the first of the current contract end dates in 2028 and/or align with the current refurbishment project for Bury Leisure Centre.	Develop a business case setting out cost, implications and carbon impact and what changes would be needed to the Net Zero Investment Fund to achieve this outcome.
	5.6. Continued professional development of driving staff	Consider using a driving efficiency metric within drivers PDRs to encourage more fuel efficient and safe driving.	<p>ONGOING: New monitoring system introduced in March 2023 continues to be monitored, and some driving events are being highlighted to drivers on an ongoing basis. This will be expanded as more trucks have the same technology upon replacement.</p> <p>We will also explore an investment in a trial of additional telemetry in a couple of HGVs that could enable further fuel savings. Depending on the outcome this could be expanded to other vehicles/ parts of the fleet.</p> <p>Route optimisation is carried out regularly to ensure that routes are efficient and minimise carbon emissions.</p>
		Continued professional development of driving staff.	<p>ONGOING: Driver CPC training is carried out annually. Training is mandatory for Vocational drivers. 35 hours of training must be undertaken over five years that can be split into 5 x 7 hour modules. Training is ongoing yearly. All modules are JAUPT approved, and we endeavour to select modules that are interesting and engaging to our driving staff.</p> <p>The driver CPC training will take place in June and July 2024.</p>
	5.7. Alternative fuel vehicles	Review of alternative fuel vehicles as part of vehicle procurement process.	CLOSED: After lengthy deliberations regarding HVO a decision was made to suspend any switch to HVO as it is not viable.
	5.8. Fleet Management ensure that council invests in appropriate ULEV.	Require all who request new fleet vehicles to review their needs. The default position is now ULEV and a case must be made if ICE is required.	ONGOING: The council is making decisions to replace diesel or petrol vehicles with EV alternatives, wherever viable. As with our buildings, the default position initially explored is electric, and a case has to be made to retain petrol or diesel.

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			<p>For this reason, the wording of this task has been updated in this version of the plan.</p> <p>Across 2023-2024, this action has progressed and has included: The Play Area Inspector took delivery of new EV Nissan Townstar in February 2024. The vehicle charges at West Suffolk Operational Hub overnight in staff car park.</p> <p>From April 2024, a Pilot Scheme was launched to look at installing chargers into two homes of property services staff to enable overnight charging. There is potential to expand this scheme to other van users if the project is successful.</p> <p>Through 2024-2025, we will now be looking at the business case for accelerating the conversion of other parts of the fleet (see also new task below).</p>
		Continued trials of alternative technologies for commercial vehicles, such as Road Sweepers.	<p>ONGOING: The council took delivery of second EV precinct sweeper, which is based in Bury St Edmunds Area – the sweeper has EV graphics identical to our previous Haverhill machine.</p>
		Explore options for using EVs within the [Vertas] pool car service and ensure that the number of vehicles is suitable to meet service demand.	<p>ONGOING: Three EV pool cars based at West Suffolk House Vertas are ready - charging access has also been confirmed with supplier. Communications have been drafted to help promote service once launched.</p>
		EV charging at depots.	<p>ONGOING: Electrical upgrades at West Suffolk Operational Hub were completed in March 2024. The new supplier, Joju Limited, was selected in April 2024 to provide new charging infrastructure. Installations have started at depots.</p>
		NEW TASK: Explore costs, opportunities, and implications for a mixed freighter fleet.	<p>Investigation to include EV waste freighter(s) to cover town collection route(s), recognising limitations of technology in longer rural routes.</p>
	5.9. Continue to work with Facilities Maintenance provider (VERSE) to ensure that in Cafes and Kiosks: 1. Single use plastics is minimalised or not used at all. 2. That they provide tap water free on request and advertise this service. 3. Products are locally sources where possible and food choices promote sustainability.	West Stow Visitor Centre – Engage with café operator and ask them to introduce waste management actions with staff.	<p>ONGOING: Everything is plastic free apart from bottled water at Brandon County Park due to the environmental area and customers wanting a screw top. Over the next year, alternatives will be investigated, though these will likely be more expensive and could potentially put off customers. However, Brandon County Park has a water fountain on the outside of the café, which is readily used by visitors for refilling their own water vessel. Everything else within the offer is biodegradable or recyclable as per all Vertas sites.</p> <p>Tap water is available and given out upon request in both Café West and Brandon County Park – and a new sign being created to advertise this.</p>

Workstream	Strategic Action	Task	Update
			Products are procured by the Vertas head office team, and pride is taken in using local suppliers wherever practicable. Greater use of more local suppliers at Endeavour House will be investigated.
	5.10. Install renewable energy systems when replacing or maintaining West Suffolk Council assets.	Install renewable energy systems when replacing or maintaining West Suffolk Council assets.	<p>ONGOING: In October 2023, following site visit with consultants a quote has been received for designing a new Ground Source Heat Pump heating system for West Suffolk House. Due to prohibitive costings, we are pursuing an alternative designer.</p> <p>In June 2024, the tender process for the Mildenhall Hub PV canopies was completed and evaluation of the tenders has commenced.</p>

Completed Tasks

Workstream	Strategic Action	Task	Completed Task Update
Biodiversity	External funding	Look for outside opportunities for grant funding or other support.	<p>COMPLETED: Newmarket – This year’s bridge and access project complete.</p>  <p>Mildenhall – The Trevor Hagger Gardens has been stripped and replanted. Certain amenity greens have been enhanced. Brandon - Landscaping work in Rought Avenue, proposed to the town council, as well as work to improve access by the Lake in Brandon County Park has been completed. Haverhill – Four amenity areas were proposed for environmental improvements and work is completed.</p>

Workstream	Strategic Action	Task	Completed Task Update
Communities & Communications	Travel & Transport Partnership Working.	Support Suffolk-wide air quality monitoring pilot with a view to finding opportunities to improve air quality in hotspot areas and gain greater insight into particulate pollution.	COMPLETE NZIP analysed PM data in Bury St Edmunds and found no links with traffic. High levels were linked to Saharan dust and Bonfire night. The report, and a guide to air quality planning conditions, have been shared nationally with Air Quality officers.
	Raise Awareness and promote actions taken by WSC and Communities.	Create communications plan.	COMPLETE New Communications Planner developed internally and promoted among relevant staff.
Existing Housing	By working with partners explore how they wish to improve the energy efficiency of homes.	Establish the commitment to Decent Home Standard (DHS) or higher energy performance homes.	COMPLETE While not all properties are yet up to specification, the council has made a commitment to meet the DHS standard and to improve properties that West Suffolk Council is responsible for.
Planning and Regulation	Through the local plan process, address the challenge of protecting and enhancing biodiversity while providing growth.	Investigate and develop a new local plan tree strategy.	COMPLETE By December 2023, a new tree strategy and green infrastructure policies were developed and submitted to the Local Plan.
Corporate action	Environmental management systems	Introduce new measures to the council's quarterly performance report.	COMPLETE New water KPI added to corporate performance monitoring in October 2023. Business travel is already included.
	Learning from COVID - Encourage all council teams to consider and review their ways of working.	Seek to increase office recycling provision supported with clear signage and comms in place for September 2023.	COMPLETE New signage has been added to West Suffolk House, Mildenhall Hub and Haverhill House. In addition, an intranet post was published in January 2024 to inform staff on correct recycling practices. The waste and recycling intranet page has also been updated.
		Include reference and link to net zero ambition in job adverts for new staff. Have this in place for all posts by August 2023.	COMPLETE Relevant job adverts now include references to net zero and climate scorecard success. The West Suffolk Council recruitment website has also been updated with references to the council's climate commitments and recent climate score card results.
		Ensure that environmental impacts are considered when making key decisions from September 2023.	COMPLETE By January 2024, committee report papers were amended to bolster the environmental section, at the recommendation of the ESWG.
Environmental management systems.	Introduce a suitable water consumption metric to compare building performance.	COMPLETE Water consumption is now reported on within the councils key KPIs including top consuming sites or league table.	

Workstream	Strategic Action	Task	Completed Task Update
		Ensure that Cafe West are disposing of waste in most sustainable way.	COMPLETE By early 2024, Verse use recycling, food waste bins and glass recycling the same as the rest of the building.